

# The Ins and Outs of SMS Marketing

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For those not familiar with SMS marketing, this type of marketing is content sent to a mobile phone. You'll see this called Short Message Service and also Short Message Server.

You might sometimes see it referred to as text message marketing. The phone numbers of mobile phone users are gathered through opt-ins and other means and then a message campaign is sent out.

While a business is supposed to have permission from the mobile phone user to send any content, some don't get permission first. This is why you can end up getting spam text messages you didn't sign up for on your cell phone.

## **Why You'll Want to Use SMS Marketing**

The world has gone mobile and you have to let your business marketing evolve with them or you'll get left behind. Everywhere that you are online, you need to make sure that potential customers know you have a mobile opt-in.

You can put this on your websites and social media sites. It works just like people opting in for email contact, but instead of entering their email information, they enter their mobile phone number to get offers and other content from you.

Make sure that you have something in place set up so that when they do opt-in, they get some kind of acknowledgement. This can be something as simple as "Thanks for signing up. Here's a 20% off coupon as a gift for you."

If you're not currently using SMS marketing, there are several good reasons that you want to get onboard with this right away. You can use this marketing as a stand-alone strategy or, like many businesses do, you can combine it with other forms of marketing to get more customers, faster.

With SMS marketing, you get an instant delivery rate and studies have shown that more people will read a text message than will read an email message. In fact, text messaging has been shown to have more successful marketing campaigns than email marketing campaigns.

Text messages are read almost instantaneously, while email messages where the content is marketing either get deleted, go unread or get caught by the receiver's spam filter and never even reach your intended audience.

Too many email campaigns can be hit and miss. You actually miss more of your intended audience than you reach. But with SMS marketing, the messages end up reaching your targeted audience.

This means that you end up getting a better return on your investment than you would with an email campaign. Because more people are mobile and using mobile devices is fast and easy, when you sent out a marketing text, it's more likely to be forwarded on to someone else than it would if it was an email message.

This means that you'll increase your circle of potential customers without doing anything extra at all and without it costing you anything extra either. You can use SMS to help build a loyal customer base from the customers that you already have and you can use it to gain new customers.

It's easier to use this type of marketing to create a strong following, too!

### **What You Need to Get Started with SMS Marketing**

There are some tools available to you online that will guide you through creating everything you need to get started with SMS marketing. These are handy if you're tech savvy and enjoy doing things for yourself.

It's also fairly easy for those who have run other types of marketing and kind of know the ropes already. But for those who don't know anything about how this or any kind of marketing works, you're going to want to look into a marketing agency.

Not just any marketing agency. You'll want to look for a company that specializes in mobile marketing because it is a little different. They can also help make sure that you have a website that's mobile ready because if you don't, you can end up losing customers.

Not all websites that are suitable for desktop computers and laptops are compatible with mobile devices. So you'll want to check that before you start your marketing.

When you get ready to market, make sure that you have a strategy in mind for how you're going to do it. For example, just like any kind of marketing, you're going to want to choose a keyword that relates to your marketing endeavor.

If you hire a marketing business, they can help you choose a good one. You'll need to figure out the reason why you're going to do the SMS marketing. If you're a new business, you can use it for promotion, to get the word out about your business.

Some companies use this kind of marketing to alert their customers that they're having freebie days. Such as buy one meal, get another meal of equal value free. Or they advertise discounts on products.

They can also be used to announce the arrival of something new you have to sell. Basically, you can use this marketing medium for anything that can help your business grow.

But like any kind of marketing, there is both an upside as well as a downside, so you'll have to weigh both to see if it's right for you.

### **The Good and the Bad of SMS Marketing**

There are plenty of times throughout the day when people are not at their computer. They're not in front of their email, so when you send an opportunity through email, they might not even see it that day.

And sometimes, when a message comes through that's dated for the day or even two days prior and it's an offer, people will just delete it. But the majority of people who use mobile phones are in constant contact with their phones.

They're always checking them, always reacting to an incoming text message alert. So, you get to reach people faster. Another good part of SMS marketing is that because people are on the go with their cell phones, if you send them an offer that's for something they can use while they're out and about, nine times out of ten, they're going to respond and use your offer.

Plus, a lot of people read their text messages when they're with family and friends, so they're going to turn around and tell them what they just got, creating more interest in your company and products.

It's easy for the sender to make the content that's sent. You don't have to have a lot of fancy graphics; you don't need a web designer and you don't need a lot of space.

The focus with mobile phones is on keeping things simple yet effective. You get better customer interaction when you have a mobile platform and it's easier for the customer to respond or to open a dialogue with your business.

If you're sending them a good deal, they're going to spread the word. "Hey, look what I got just now" and this will create a widespread, instant appeal. You end up getting more views and there's a big possibility that your promotions could even end up going viral - especially if the content is eye-catching.

The SMS marketing field is not overly saturated like some marketing mediums are. There are so many marketing emails sent out that are unwanted today that the wanted ones are often overlooked because of the spam flood.

Using SMS will free you from that flood where there are not as many offers being delivered. That means that yours has a better potential of not only reaching the target, but standing out as well.

Another upside to mobile marketing is that there are so many advanced ways that mobile users can make a purchase. They're so linked that

you can send an offer and the customer can simply touch a button on his phone and instantly the payment is sent to you.

So there's a greater chance that you'll make a sale much faster with this kind of marketing over email and other types of marketing. Like any kind of marketing though, there are a few drawbacks that you'll want to consider before you get started.

First, because mobile phones can all be so different, you can't create a one size fits all campaign that's going to run smoothly on all devices. There are bound to be some technical glitches from one type of device to another.

So you might get some complaints from that end. Secondly, if your site doesn't support their browsing ability, you may just lose that customer for good and if he's not happy about it, you can bet he's going to tell others about it.

Third, if you accidentally send a message to someone who did opt-out but you didn't get the memo, this can cause complaints to get lodged against your company with the cell phone company and there are very strict laws in place against sending unwanted text messages.

### **What Should You Say in Your SMS?**

The exact content of what's said will vary depending on what your company does. But there are some things that are the same across the board regardless of what you're promoting and you'll want to pay attention to those.

There is a right way to send out SMS messages because it is a different type of format that has to be used. You want to watch the number of words you use. Don't waste space trying to be clever, cute or to go into a long explanation about your service or product.

Because while there are many pros for you to use SMS marketing, one of the cons is that you just don't have a lot of room. This means that you can't ramble on.

You have to use precise, clear wording and get straight to the point. This might mean that you have to be a little more creative in order to make your message stand out, but you can do it.

Next, don't overload the message or make it look like a hyped-up sales pitch. Avoid repeated words. For example, you don't want to say, "Purchase the ABC project for only \$99 today only. Limited time so buy now!"

There's no need to use both purchase and buy and there's no need to reiterate what you say such as "today only" and "limited time" because it's almost the same thing.

So choose your words carefully to get the maximum impact from them. Don't ramble on using big words. Keep them simple. Make your message as easy to read as possible by using punctuation and capitalization.

Stick to correct spelling rather than using shortcuts that could have your customers scratching their heads trying to figure out what you're saying. Timing is everything.

While standard marketing through email messages say that most people don't pay attention to offers received in their inbox on holidays, it's different with SMS marketing.

People do read offers on their phones during special times of the year. Studies have shown that the best time to present an SMS offer is in the afternoon versus the morning hours.

Most people take care of their to-do list in the mornings and they're busy handling things so anything you send during that time will probably get ignored. So stick to afternoon or in the evenings.

Know your target audience's time zone and avoid sending messages around dinnertime. Not only will those get ignored, but it could also make your audience angry that you interrupted their meal.

There are five important parts that should be in all your SMS messages. The first one is the right keyword. What this is for an SMS message is something that your target audience is going to use to respond to your message.

For example, some competition shows or radio programs would say "Text 123 to respond to the offer." This is what your keyword is and it's why it's important. Without

the keyword, you won't know what your audience is responding to and you won't be able to track the results either.

The second part is any coupon codes that your customer will need to get the deal or the discounted offer. The third part of your SMS offer needs to have a call to action just like you would have on your website.

You should present a call to action with every offer that you send out to the customers. The fourth important part to have in your SMS messages is the content.

This should be whatever your message is about. It can be an image, or text or whatever it is that promotes your business. The final part is acknowledging when your customer does react.

It can be a simply "Thank you!" in return or a "Someone will contact you" just something that lets them know you received their acknowledgement of your offer.

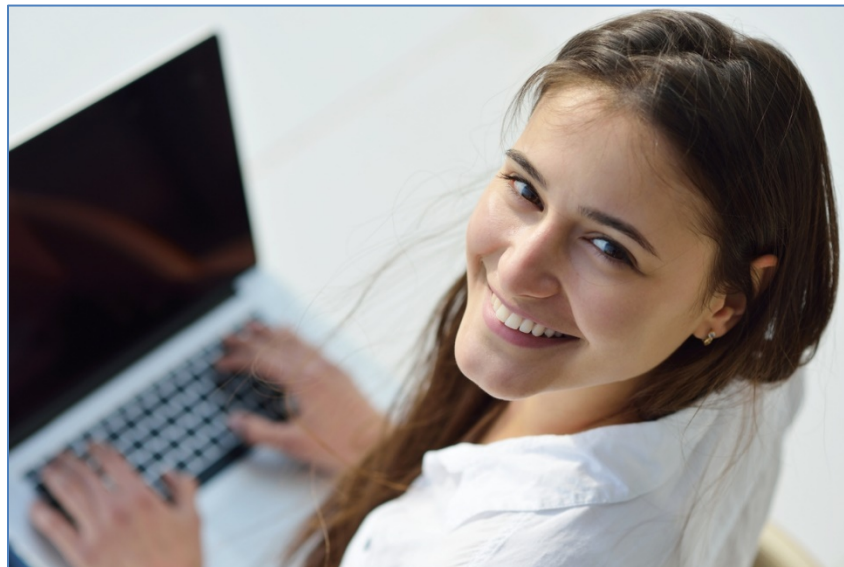
### **Mistakes to Avoid with SMS Marketing**

Not only can some mistakes be expensive for you, but you can end up getting in legal trouble too. Make sure that you have clear guidelines for your potential customers to read before they sign up about how they'll be contacted and make it clear that by opting-in, they're giving you permission to contact them via their mobile device.

Don't overload your customers with messages or it will annoy them. Don't contact them more once every four to five weeks. You must make it easy for a customer to unsubscribe.

This is an area where you can run into legal trouble if you don't. The law says you must provide a way for subscribers to unsubscribe. You need to know how much the SMS campaign is going to cost you up front and you need to let customers know of the possibility they can be charged for receiving your messages depending in the phone data plan they have.

Know the mobile marketing laws in the states where you're going to send out your campaign so that you avoid making a mistake that can be a very expensive one to make.



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